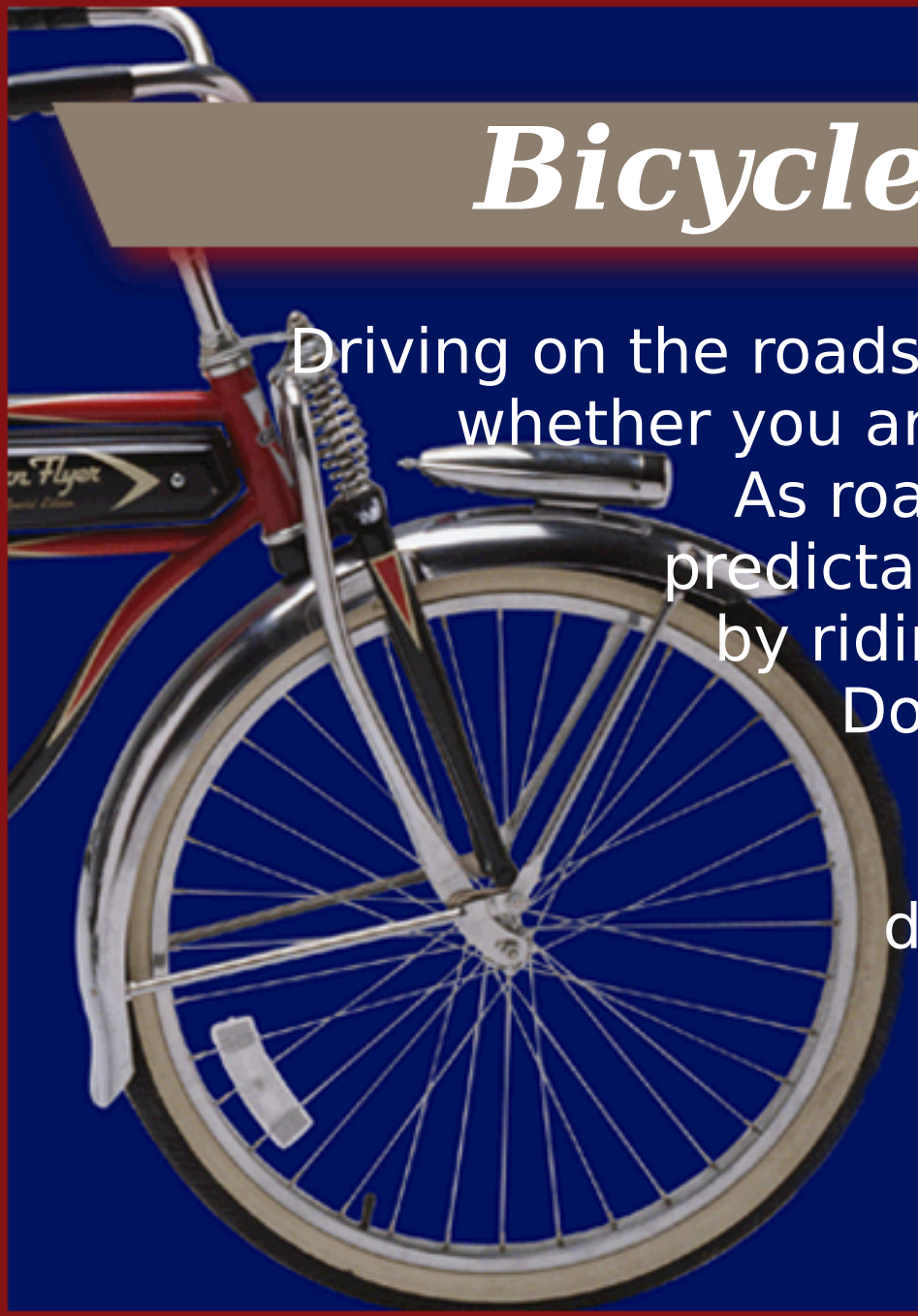
Bicycle Safety



Driving on the roads requires care and courtesy whether you are driving a car or a bicycle. As road users, bicyclists must be predictable and obey all traffic laws by riding in a responsible manner. Do your part by being a good ambassador to bicycling. Below are a few bicycle driving rules for your review.

Standards and Regulations

Traffic Laws that apply in the State of Washington and on the Fort Lewis Military Reservation.

Title 18 United States Code, Section 1

- DOD Directive 5525.4
- AR 385-55 Prevention of Motor Vehi Accidents
- Title 46 of Revised Code of Washing
- FL Reg 190-5 Installation Traffic Code
- Washington State Drivers Guide
- American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- Snell Memorial Foundation or the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM)

- A child is four times more likely to be seriously injured in a bicycle crash than to be kidnapped by a stranger
- About 900 bicycle riders are killed in the U.S. every year, 90% involve collisions with cars, and 75% of them die of brain injuries

Distribution of bicycle deaths:

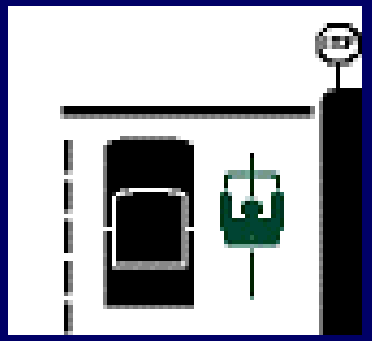
- 49% of all deaths occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m
- Summer: May, June and July have the highest percent of bicycle related deaths
- About six times as many bicycle deaths are males compared with females
- 33% of deaths occurred at intersections
- Bicycle incidents are most likely to occur within 5 blocks of home

Distribution of bicycle deaths:

- Almost half of all bicycle crashes occur in driveways and on sidewalks.
- 96% of bicyclists killed were reportedly not wearing helmets.
- Medical research shows that 88% of cyclists' brain injuries can be prevented by a bicycle helmet.
- Universal use of helmets could prevent one death every day and one brain injury every four minutes.
- Having friends or parents who wear bike helmets significantly encourages children to use

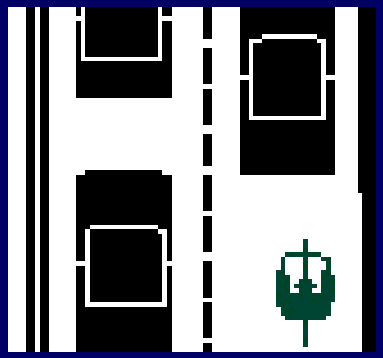
Obey All Traffic Laws

Bicycles are vehicles and must obey all traffic laws, including stop signs and traffic signals. It can be tempting to ignore traffic rules, but this is when most crashes occur.



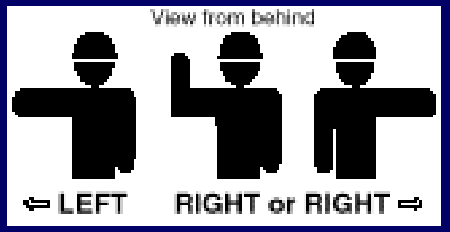
Ride With Traffic

Always ride on the right side of the road. Do not pass motorists on the right. If you approach an intersection with a right turn lane and intend to continue straight, ride in the through lane with traffic.



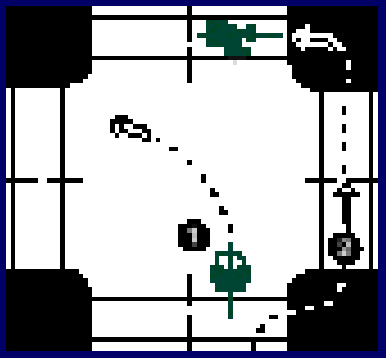
Signal All Turns

Look back before you make a lane change or turn. Signal safely in advance using one of these signals.



Making Left Hand Turns

You may turn left as a vehicle (1) by moving into the left side of the travel lane (or left turn lane). **OR** Cross like a pedestrian (2) by stopping, dismounting, and walking across crosswalks.

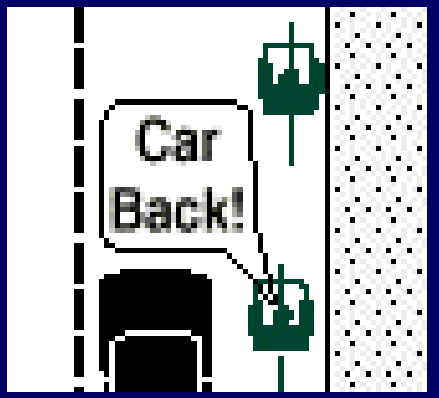


Always Ride With Lights at Night

Maine State Law requires a headlight and rear red reflectors visible from at least 500 feet when riding at night. Flashing tail lights and light colored and/or reflective clothing are highly recommended. See and be seen!

Communicate With Other Cyclists

Let other cyclists behind you know when you approach hazards. Inform cyclists in front when you are drafting. Call out with a friendly greeting when you are passing. Do not shout "All Clear" at stop signs as each cyclist must take personal responsibility and obey traffic laws.

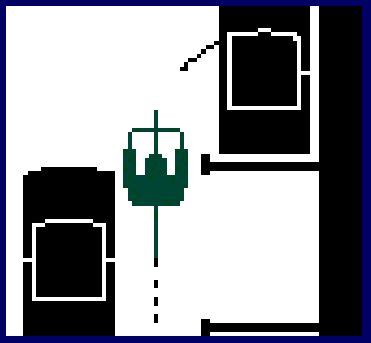


Ride Single File in Traffic

Always ride single file except when passing others. Also, notify other bicyclists of approaching cars.

Watch for Potential Hazards

Scan the road 100 feet ahead for hazards such as debris, tracks, drains or potholes. Allow time to maneuver around these hazards and negotiate with traffic. Avoid riding into an opening with traffic. Avoid riding into open car doors by giving yourself 3 or 4 feet.



Warn Others When Approaching

Bicyclists must yield to pedestrians. Be courteous by warning others with a ring of your bell or a friendly greeting. Allow plenty of space when passing.

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Signal Before Stopping

When you are preparing to slow or stop, indicate your intentions to others using hand and verbal warnings.

Pull Off Road When Stopped

If you need to stop for any reason, pull completely off the road to avoid obstructing other bicyclists and other road users.

Watch for Animals

Animals are often excited by the movement of bicycles. Always yield to horses. Most unleashed dogs are not dangerous. Simply stopping may halt their chase. Squirting water and a forceful "NO!" also work well.

Use Care at Rail Crossings

Always cross train tracks at right angles and avoid drain grates to prevent your front wheel getting pulled down.

Don't Swerve Between Parked Cars

Ride in a predictable manner by proceeding in a straight line.

Make Eye Contact

The best way to communicate your intentions with other drivers is to get their attention with eye contact.

Be Prepared for Weather Conditions

If it's raining, allow yourself extra distance to stop. If it's clear, use ample sunscreen and drink extra water.

Anticipate Hills

Anticipate hills by shifting in advance.

Only Pass on the LEFT

Only pass on the left of other cyclists. Call out a friendly greeting to warn them.

Create Gaps

Create gaps in the line to allow space for passing cyclists or cars to advance.

Think For Yourself -- Fight Mob Mentality

When riding in a large group, the "strength in numbers" can be intoxicating. Remember that individual thinking and action is essential for everyone's safety.

Maintain & Regularly Inspect Your Equipment

Be safe and keep your bike tuned up. Take it to a bike shop at least twice a year for professional inspection. Secure any loads tightly to a rack or trailer. Before every ride be sure to:

-make sure the brakes work properly and don't rub

-check tires and make sure they are firm

-make certain quick releases and other bolts are tight

Be Prepared

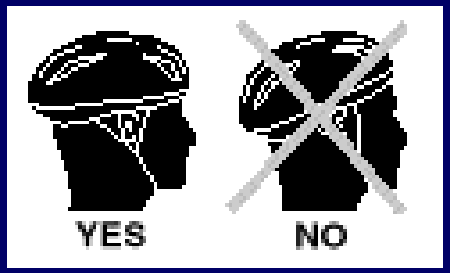
Always take along basic tools, patch kit, pump, a few extra dollars, and some spare change (for a pay phone). In addition to water bottles, pack an energy bar just in case your ride lasts longer than expected.

Dress for the Occasion

Wear bright colors to be easily seen. Don't wear loose clothing and don't leave any laces or strings dangling or they may get tangled in the gears or wheels. Cycling gloves protect your hands and help reduce fatigue. NEVER wear headphones on a bike -- you need all your senses!

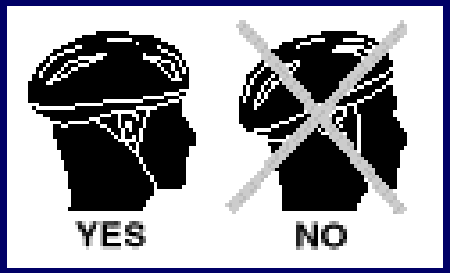
Wear a Helmet Correctly

Helmets are required by law for anyone under 16 but everyone should wear a helmet to prevent head injury. However, if your helmet doesn't fit properly, it isn't likely to serve you well if you crash.



Do the "Eyes, Ears, Mouth Test" *every time* you go biking. First, place the helmet on your head -- it should be level and snug. If it slides around you need to insert additional pads.

Eyes -- looking up past your eyebrows, you should see the very edge of the helmet



Ears -- the straps should meet right under your earlobes

Mouth -- when buckled, the strap should be loose enough so you can breathe and insert two fingers between it and your chin, but tight enough that if you drop your jaw you can feel the helmet pull down on the top of your head

Ensuring a good helmet fit at first can take some time. Some helmets need minor adjustments every day, but usually only take a moment to adjust properly. If you have problems, your local bike shop can help.

Advantages of a Jersey

While there isn't anything wrong with wearing a T-shirt while biking, bike jerseys offer several advantages.

Technical fabrics provide moisture-wicking properties that remove sweat from your skin and bring it to the surface, where it rapidly evaporates. This increases comfort while riding and keeps you from becoming cold and damp when you come to a stop after a period of exertion.

Advantages of a Jersey

Three back pockets provide a convenient place to store a wallet, gloves, energy bars, or even a lightweight jacket. The pockets are located on the back instead of the sides prevent them from rubbing against your legs while pedaling

Extended fabric on the back covers your lower back when you are bent over in a "tucked bicycling position.

Advantages of a Jersey

Snug-fitting jerseys don't flap in the wind or snag on things like tree branches as easily as looser fitting T-shirts

Bright colors make you more visible to other vehicles on the road

Questions?